

A Holdout on the White Council by flippyspoon

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Summary:

Everybody is cool with Billy...except Dustin.

A Holdout on the White Council

Dustin was looking for Steve, but he found Billy instead, shooting hoops in Steve's backyard where a basket was installed behind the garage. Billy, it seemed, was always at Steve's nowadays. Maybe that wasn't fair as a lot of them were always at Steve's these days, the elder Harringtons receiving this with not much more than bemusement as they were often absent anyway.

Dustin crossed his arms and frowned, watching Billy shoot from down the yard, inevitably make his basket, and run down to grab the ball again.

Steve and Billy were...*dating*.

Dustin got a little sour taste in the back of his throat just thinking about it.

This had been brought to light after Lucas had, *repeatedly*, said, "Oh my God, Dustin, wake up and smell the gay coffee" and after repeated hints from Max who had been trying to tell them without telling them. Finally The Party had walked in on Billy and Steve kissing in Steve's kitchen, they'd just been standing there; still in their coats and jackets, Billy gently tugging only Steve's lapels. They'd been kissing like they did it a lot. Steve had been *smiling*.

Dustin had not reacted well.

"He's possessed by the Mind Flayer." He'd been so sure of it he had almost started crying because he thought of Steve as his brother or maybe like a dad or some combination of brother and dad or something, but the relevant issue was STEVE WAS OBVIOUSLY POSSESSED BY THE MIND FLAYER.

Mike had been on his side for about an hour and then everyone had talked him down. But he'd still kept his eyes peeled for possessed-Steve-like behavior. Of which there was plenty. But it all had to do with Steve *DATING BILLY HARGROVE*.

Dustin watch Billy drop the basketball and stride over to his jacket

and take out a pack of cigarettes. Billy was wearing jeans and one of Steve's old t-shirts. Dustin knew it was Steve's t-shirt because it said: Hawkins High Walk-a-thon 1982.

Deductive reasoning.

Billy Hargrove had not actually done anything really bad for a long time. Other than get in fights with people who weren't Steve and who were pretty douchey themselves. Billy was on good terms with both Max and Lucas. Will liked him a lot for reasons Dustin could not comprehend. Eleven liked him even more. Mike was...indifferent.

Dustin hated Billy.

Lucas had asked him why and at this point all Dustin could come up with was: "He's a tool and he's not good enough for Steve!"

But he thought that was plenty.

At first he'd been freaked out by the gay thing. Then he'd made the mistake of mentioning it to his mother.

He hadn't been very smart or smooth about it, walking into the kitchen as his mother was making dinner, dropping his backpack and blurting: "Mom, Steve is gay and he's dating Billy Hargrove!"

His mother had turned around and blinked at him and said, "Wasn't he dating Nancy Wheeler for a long time?"

Dustin had thrown up his hands and said, "Yeah, so what!"

"Did he say he's gay?"

"No-"

"Then he's bisexual, sweetie." Then she'd gone back to making casserole.

"B-b-bisect what...what the...?"

Dustin had made about twenty different noises with his lips and stomped over to lean against the counter and make her see reason.

“The *point* is, he’s dating a *guy*! Billy freaking Hargrove! Who is definitely gay!”

“Mmmhmm.” His mother was sprinkling cheese.

“Mom. Steve can’t be gay or bisexual or whatever! He’s *cool*. He’s not all...” Dustin had made a flamboyant gesture with his hands and his mother had grabbed his wrist, her eyes narrowed.

“Dustin Frederick Henderson, I did not raise you to be prejudiced,” his mother said. “Your Uncle Rodney is gay and do you know two of his friends have died in the last year-”

“I-I...yeah but-”

“Dusty! Can you imagine how hard it is for them to live in a place like Hawkins? You will show nothing but respect to Steve Harrington *and* his boyfriend!”

“Okay okay! I’m sorry!”

“In fact, I’m inviting them dinner.”

“Oh, c’mon!”

“DINNER.”

His mother hadn’t dropped it either. He’d been subjected to three lectures and then she’d called Uncle Rodney in Chicago and there’d been sort of an awkward conversation about Rodney growing up gay in a small town and also about freaking *AIDS* and then Dustin had felt *really* bad for ever having a problem with it at all. He’d forgotten all about Uncle Rodney because he didn’t really think of Uncle Rodney as a *gay* dude so much as his mom’s younger brother who was a lawyer and super boring to talk to and lived with a man who was his “partner” but not in the law firm sense and who was much more interesting to talk to because he knew comic books and was totally obsessed with Nightwing. Whoops.

But Dustin still hated Billy Hargrove.

“You need something, Henderson?” Billy blew smoke in Dustin’s

general direction. "Or are you just gonna stare at me all day?"

"I was looking for Steve," Dustin said, crossing his arms.

Billy squinted at him, sucking on his cigarette. "Went to the store."

"Oh."

"You can wait for him." Billy grabbed his jacket and strode past Dustin back into the house and Dustin, unsure of his footing, followed him into the Harrington's big fancy kitchen with the marbly looking countertops and the steel fridge. He hovered by the counter, watching Billy drop his jacket on a chair, heading straight for the fridge like he owned the place. He grabbed a Gatorade and took a swig, wiping his mouth.

"You want a Gatorade?" Billy said.

"No."

Billy opened the fridge again and glanced inside. "You want a Hi-C?"

"Yeah."

Billy stood there drinking his Gatorade glaring down at Dustin who stabbed his straw into the juicebox with what he considered a threatening manner, glaring back.

There had been a growing tension between them.

The Gate was open again. Nothing had happened yet but there had been a lot of meetings of The Party and Steve was in The Party and now, Billy appeared to be in The Party. *Unofficially*, Dustin inwardly noted. Everytime Billy opened his mouth, Dustin had a reason to think what he'd said was stupid (even though it was usually smart because Billy was *smart* which was *annoying*) and then Billy would bite back, looming over Dustin, and Steve would stand between them looking a bit like a deer in the headlights.

"Just say it, kid," Billy said, draining the last of his Gatorade and slamming the empty bottle on the kitchen counter.

"You're not good enough for Steve!" Dustin said.

"I know!" Billy snapped.

Dustin was so shocked he took an actual step back. Billy looked...*sad* all of a sudden.

Billy opted not to elaborate and just said, "Anything else?"

Dustin only shrugged.

He thought the conversation was over and his juice-box was empty, and then Billy said. "Alright, what the hell do I do then, Henderson? You're the smart one, right?"

Dustin choked a little. All his friends were really smart. Was he the smart one? It was definitely down to him and Lucas. Although Max was a serious contender. He got distracted for a second and Billy snapped his fingers in his face.

"Kid?"

"Huh?"

Billy rolled his eyes and said, "Listen, everybody else is cool with it now. Okay? Except you. But you can't hate me."

"I do."

"Yeah, I know. So I'm *fucked*."

"Why?" Dustin said, sneering a little.

"Because you're his favorite, dummy," Billy spat. "You're like his little brother or something. Or his kid. Not sure which. If you hate me, eventually Steve's going to drop me like a hot potato."

Billy looked like he'd already been dropped, lighting a cigarette again, like it might be his last.

Shit, Dustin thought. *Billy loves Steve*.

The whole love aspect hadn't quite hit him.

Billy loves Steve.

“So what do I do?” Billy said. “How do I get you on my side, shitbird? You want me to play goddamn D&D? You want me to beat somebody up for ya? Gimme a clue.”

Dustin gaped at him, disbelieving. “You don’t even know Steve.”

“Yes,” Billy snapped. “I do.”

“Okay, well if you really knew him, you’d know it doesn’t matter if I hate you. If Steve really cares about you, *I’m* the one who’s fucked.”

“Steve’s loyal,” Billy said.

“Yeah,” Dustin agreed. “Sure. But that means he’s loyal to you too. He dropped *whatsisname* and *whatsername* because they were dicks to Nancy, right?”

“Tommy and Carol,” Billy muttered. “Yeah. But he likes you a lot more than Tommy and Carol.”

“He’s not going to dump you because I don’t like you,” Dustin grumbled. “He’s just going to stress out about it probably. He stresses out a lot.”

“Oh trust me, that I do know.” Billy chuckled a little at that. “I talk him down from the ledge all the time. Not...literally.”

Dustin sighed. He needed to *think* dammit. “Another Hi-C, please?”

Billy tossed him another Hi-C and he stabbed the straw again and took a good long sip of Grape.

“Look,” Dustin said, and smacked his lips. “It doesn’t matter anyway. It’s not like I’m going to meet with...with the White Council or something and-”

“Are you comparing me to fucking Sauron?” Billy said, scowling at him.

More astonished, Dustin could not have been.

“Y-you...you...” Dustin couldn’t form a sentence. “You know...”

“Yeah, I like Tolkien okay? I like Metallica and Tolkien. What’s your problem, Henderson? You know who else loves Tolkien? *Led Zeppelin*.”

“Buh...I...” Dustin cleared his throat and said, “Bet you haven’t read *The Silmarillion*.”

Billy snorted and said, “Why? You want to talk about the Valar, kid? I can talk about the Valar all fucking day.” He leaned down, getting right in Dustin’s face and said in a low voice, “You want to talk about the Coming of Men? The Wars of the Silmarils? What’ll it be? *Kid*?”

“Jesus,” Dustin muttered.

Billy stood up straight again looking very proud of himself and took a drag.

A significant part of Dustin suddenly forgot to hate Billy Hargrove.

“You’ve never played D&D?” Dustin said.

“No,” Billy said flatly.

Dustin drained his Hi-C and then said, “You’re a Barbarian.”

“Fuck you too.”

“No, I mean your character class. If you played with us, you’d definitely be a Barbarian.”

“What’s a Barbarian do?” Billy said, raising an eyebrow, blowing smoke.

“Well, they go into a these rage fueled fighting frenzies,” Dustin said. “Their rage is the source of their strength.”

“Yeah,” Billy said. “That sounds like me.”

“Okay,” Dustin said. “You have to play with us. That’s what you have

to do.”

“You want me to play Dungeons and Dragons with you?” Billy said.
“That’s it?”

“A Tolkien fan should like it,” Dustin said. At least he was hoping Billy would. They could use a Barbarian. “Also...maybe we could watch *Lord of the Rings*. With Steve too, I mean.”

Billy contemplated that and said, “I hate how they drew Gollum.”

“Okay, me too. But it’s all there is.” Dustin shrugged. “Besides, I’ve been trying to get Steve to-”

“Steve won’t read it,” Billy said, sighing. “I’ve tried. He just complains about the dwarf songs and how long it is and he gets all the elves mixed up-”

“Yeah. Alright. But we’re watching *Lord of the Rings*.”

“Deal,” Billy said.

Dustin felt better. He coughed and said, “You know, my Uncle Rodney is gay-”

“Let’s quit while we’re ahead, kid.”

“Listen,” Dustin said. “I think *maybe* you are good enough for Steve. Okay. If you like...prove yourself. And if you’re into Tolkien. And if you’re going to fight Upside Down stuff with us.”

“Oh, I can’t *wait* to fight some monsters,” Billy said, grinning.

“Oh my God, you’re such a Barbarian.”